

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 4, 7 and 10 are amended. No new matter is believed to be added. Claims 1-12 are pending and under consideration.

OBJECTION TO THE SPECIFICATION

The specification is objection to as being unclear because of references to "Patent Document 1" or "Patent Document 2." Applicant respectfully notes that the identity of the patent documents was specified on page 18 of the originally filed specification, and therefore the specification as a whole was not indefinite. In order to enhance clarity in view of the objection, the specification is amended herewith to identify the patent documents on page 10, in the paragraph in which the patent documents are first mentioned. In view of these amendments to the specification, Applicants respectfully requests the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The informalities noted in claims 7 is corrected herewith. However in fact claim 6 is correct. The claim states that "super cells [...] which intersect at" certain location, that is "at least one point...". In view of the claim amendments and these explanations, Applicant respectfully requests the claim objections be withdrawn.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §101

Claims 7-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as allegedly not meeting the statutory subject matter test set forth by CAFC in *In re Bilski*. Claim 7 is amended herewith to specify that the claimed method is performed "in an apparatus including halftone plates of a plurality of colors." The recited operation directly refer to the halftone plates which are hardware elements of the apparatus. Therefore, claims 7-12 satisfy the above-identified statutory subject matter test as being tied to the apparatus including halftone plates. In view of the claim amendments and the above explanations, Applicant respectfully requests the rejection of claims 7-12 under 35 U.S.C. §101 be withdrawn.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-5 and 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,270,835 to Urabe et al. (hereinafter "Urabe"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,455,682 to Ikuta ("Ikuta").

Independent claim 1 is amended herewith to clarify that in the claimed apparatus "each halftone plate is tilted at a specified screen angle and has a relative screen angular difference of 15 degrees or 30 degrees in relation to a next neighboring screen angle" and comprises

one selected halftone plate that is selected from ~~and the remaining~~ halftone plates other than the basic halftone plate, and that has a screen angle difference of 30 degrees or 45 degrees in relation to the basic halftone plate, wherein a right triangle is defined for each of the remaining halftone plates such that its vertical angle is equal to a screen angle difference of 30 degrees or 45 degrees which the selected halftone plate has in relation to ~~another~~ the basic halftone plate, and its two sides forming the vertical angle corresponds to screen angle directions of the two halftone plates, and on the basis of the right triangle, respective halftone dots of the two halftone plates are disposed at a pitch equal to the predetermined pitch along the screen angle directions of the two halftone plates corresponding to the two sides forming the vertical angle, the right triangle having a vertical angle of 30 degrees and a ratio of its three sides $\sqrt{3}:1:2$ or a vertical angle of 45 degrees and a ratio of its three sides $1:1:\sqrt{2}$.

Claim 4 is amended to correspond to amended claim 1. The claim amendments are supported by the originally filed application. No new matter is added.

Applicant found no evidence that Urabe and Ikuta alone or in combination render obvious the apparatus as recited in amended claim 1 (e.g., the above-reproduced features recited in amended claim 1). Therefore, amended independent claim 1 and claims 2-6 depending from claim 1 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Independent claim 7 is amended herewith in a manner similar to amended claim 1. Claim 10 is amended to correspond to amended claim 1. No new matter is added. The claim amendments are supported by the originally filed application.

Applicant believes that amended independent claim 7 and claims 8-12 depending from claim 7 patentably distinguish over Urabe and Ikuta because Urabe and Ikuta alone or in combination fail to render obvious at least the following features recited in amended claim 7:

- a method of forming multicolor halftone images in **an apparatus including halftone plates** of a plurality of colors for reproducing a colored image, wherein **each halftone plate is tilted at a specified screen angle and has a relative screen angular difference of 15 degrees or 30 degrees in relation to a next neighboring screen angle,**
- **disposing one selected halftone plate** selected from the halftone plates other than

the basic halftone plate, **to have a screen angle difference of 30 degrees or 45 degrees in relation to the basic halftone plate,**

- defining, for each of the remaining halftone plates, a right triangle such that its vertical angle is equal to a screen angle difference of 30 degrees or 45 degrees which the selected halftone plate has in relation to the basic halftone plate, and its two sides forming the vertical angle corresponds to screen angle directions of the two halftone plates, **the right triangle having a vertical angle of 30 degrees and a ratio of its three sides $\sqrt{3}:1:2$ or a vertical angle of 45 degrees and a ratio of its three sides $1:1:\sqrt{2}$,**
- representing **the ratio of the three sides of the right triangle represented by numerical values including $\sqrt{3}$ or $\sqrt{2}$, which is an irrational number, the numerical values being approximated by integral values which approximate values obtained by multiplying the numerical values by an integer, and**
- **disposing, on the basis of the right triangle having a ratio approximated by integral values, respective halftone dots of the basic and the selected halftone plates at a pitch equal to the predetermined pitch along the screen angle directions of the two halftone plates corresponding to the two sides forming the vertical angle. (Emphasis added.)**

Claims 6 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Urabe and Ikuta in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,766,807 to Delabastita et al. ("Delabastita"). Applicant found no evidence that Delabastita corrects or compensates for the above-identified failure of Urabe and Ikuta to render obvious all the features recited in the independent claims 1 and 7. Therefore, claims 6 and 12 patentably distinguish over Urabe, Ikuta and Delabastita at least by inheriting patentable features from independent claims 1 and 7 from which claims 6 and 12 respectively depend.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

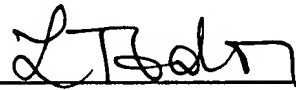
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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